

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00138 162219Z

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ACTION IO-11

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AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, UN

SUBJECT: ECOSOC ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING: 61ST SESSION AT
ABIDJAN

1. SUMMARY. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, AT ITS ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION, ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IVORY COAST TO HOLD THE FIRST PART OF THE 61ST SESSION OF ECOSOC IN ABIDJAN FROM JULY 1-9, 1976. THE REMAINDER OF THE 61ST SESSION WILL BE HELD IN GENEVA, AS IS TRADITIONAL, FROM JULY 12 TO AUGUST 6. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE OPENING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION OF ECOSOC, THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AKE OF THE IVORY COAST, INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WISHED TO SUGGEST THAT SOME PART OF THE SUMMER OR 61ST SESSION OF THE ECOSOC BE HELD IN ABIDJAN. ALTHOUGH
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PAGE 02 USUN N 00138 162219Z

SUCH AN INVITATION HAD BEEN RUMORED DURING THE PRECEDING

MONTHS, AKE'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON JANUARY 13 WAS THE FIRST FORMAL INDICATION OF SERIOUS INTENT. IN FORMAL SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL, ONLY THREE DELEGATIONS REACTED INITIALLY TO AKE'S SUGGESTION. THE SOVIETS' REACTIONS TO THE SUGGESTION WERE BASICALLY NEGATIVE: AMBASSADOR MAKAYEV RECALLED THAT THE HEAVY COUNCIL AGENDA MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE MAIN BODIES OF THE UN SHOULD HOLD THEIR MEETINGS AT HEADQUARTERS, AND SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR DELEGATIONS WHOSE GOVERNMENTS DID NOT MAINTAIN MISSIONS IN ABIDJAN TO FUNCTION. THE FRENCH DELEGATE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS, AND RECALLED THAT THE COUNCIL HAD TRADITIONALLY MET AT HEADQUARTERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TUNISIAN DELEGATE EXPRESSED DEEP SATISFACTION, CALLING THE MEETING AN HONOR FOR ALL OF AFRICA.

3. THE OTHER DELEGATES IN THE ROOM APPARENTLY HAD HAD LITTLE OR NO ADVANCE WORD OF THE PENDING INVITATION. NUMEROUS DELEGATES FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INFORMED THE U.S. DELEGATION THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED IN ADVANCE AND WERE SOMEWHAT CHAGRINED THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN. NONE OF THESE DELEGATES, HOWEVER, FELT THAT THEY COULD HEAD OFF COUNCIL ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION.

4. AT THE INVITATION OF AKE, INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WERE HELD ON THE QUESTION OF THE INVITATION OF JANUARY 14. AMBASSADOR MYERSON AT THAT TIME TOLD AKE THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WISHED TO MAINTAIN THE PRINCIPLE THAT UN BODIES SHOULD MEET AT THEIR HEADQUARTERS. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD THE COUNCIL DECIDE TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD DO ITS BEST TO MAKE THE SESSION A SUCCESS. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING THE AGENDA FOR THE ABIDJAN SESSION AND ITS TIMING. MYERSON SAID THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BEST TO HOLD A GENERAL DEBATE AT THE ABIDJAN SESSION AND THUS TO AVOID OPENING BUT NOT SATISFACTORILY COMPLETING ANY OF THE SCHEDULED SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS. WITH THIS IN MIND HE EXPRESSED A STRONG PREFERENCE FOR HOLDING THE SESSION IN EARLY JULY IN ABIDJAN WITH LITTLE OR NO LAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN THAT SESSION AND THE CONTINUATION OF IT IN GENEVA. THE OTHER DELEGATES ATTENDING THE CONSULTATIONS WERE THOSE OF THE UK, FRANCE, ITALY, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 USUN N 00138 162219Z

AUSTRIA. THE FRENCH DELEGATE EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE OF A SESSION IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, AFTER THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE GENEVA ECOSOC SESSION AND BEFORE THE CONVENING OF THE 31ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY. ITALY AND AUSTRIA SUPPORTED THIS SUGGESTION. THE UK DELEGATE WAVERED BUT TENDED TO FAVOR THE USG POSITION.

5. SUBSEQUENTLY AKE MET WITH THE GROUP OF 77 MEMBERS OF THE

COUNCIL. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT THAT SESSION THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS REGARDING AGENDA AND TIME OF THE SESSION WERE PUT FORWARD BY AKE. THE GROUP OF 77 DECIDED IN FAVOR OF THE EARLY JULY TIMING.

6. AT THE FORMAL SESSION OF THE COUNCIL ON JANUARY 15, AKE SAID THAT ON THE BASIS OF INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS HE WAS PREPARED TO FORMALLY PROPOSE THAT THE COUNCIL MEET IN ABIDJAN. THE DELEGATE OF PAKISTAN THEN SUGGESTED THAT A DECISION BE ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION FOR THE INVITATION AND DECIDING TO HOLD "THE FIRST PART OF THE 61ST SESSION IN ABIDJAN, IN PLENARY SESSION ONLY, AT THE MINISTRIAL OR OTHER HIGH-LEVEL FROM JULY 1-9; TO HOLD THE SECOND PART OF THE SESSION AT GENEVA FROM 12 JULY TO 6 AUGUST;" APPROXIMATELY TWENTY DELEGATIONS SPOKE TO THE PAKISTANI PROPOSAL, ALL OF THEM FAVORING IT. THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE REITERATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COUNCIL THE VIEW THAT UN ECONOMIC BODIES SHOULD MEET AT HEADQUARTERS, EXPRESSED OUR INTENTION TO COOPERATE TO MAKE THE ABIDJAN SESSION A SUCCESS, THANKED AKE AND THE ECOSOC SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR ASSURANCES THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IVORY COAST WOULD COVER THE ADDITIONAL COSTS OCCASIONED BY THE HOLDING OF PART OF THE COUNCIL SESSION AWAY FROM HEADQUARTERS, AND FINALLY RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGE THIS DECISION MIGHT HAVE ON THE SCHEDULED JOINT MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION AND THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAM AND COORDINATION (ACC/CPC).

7. FOLLOWING THE COUNCIL'S ADOPTION OF THE DECISION QUOTED ABOVE, THE DISCUSSION TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF THE ACC/CPC MEETING. PRESIDENT AKE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD, OF COURSE, BE EXTENDING INVITATIONS TO ALL HEADS OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES TO ATTEND THE ABIDJAN SESSION. AFTER A BRIEF EXCHANGE AMONG DELEGATES, THE COUNCIL DECIDED TO POSTPONE ANY DECISION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 USUN N 00138 162219Z

REGARDING THE TIMING AND VENUE OF THE ACC/CPC MEETING UNTIL ITS SPRING SESSION IN APRIL/MAY.
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